

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 128

By Harper

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Mr. Joe Gilliam, Sr., for his many accomplishments as the football coach for Tennessee State University.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those coaches who have performed their duties with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm and have brought honor to this State; and

WHEREAS, one such esteemed individual is Joe Gilliam, Sr., who served for many years in various coaching capacities at Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, Joe Gilliam graduated from West Virginia State, where he earned All-American honors as quarterback; he continued his post-graduate work at the University of Pittsburgh, then earned his Master's Degree in Secondary Education from the University of Kentucky in 1963; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gilliam stood as the head football and basketball coach at Oliver High School from 1952 to 1954, during which time his football team captured the state championship; he then worked at Jackson State University for three years. His first collegiate head coaching job was at Kentucky State University, where he compiled a 2-13-1 record before returning to coaching high school in Danville, Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gilliam became a part of one of the greatest coaching staffs in history when he joined John Merritt and Alvin Coleman at Jackson State University; the trio was soon lured to Nashville with the challenge of rebuilding the Tennessee State University (TSU) Tigers football program; their coaching partnership remained intact from 1963 to 1983; and

WHEREAS, during their twenty years together, Mr. Gilliam, Mr. Merritt, and Mr. Coleman's Tennessee State University Tigers compiled an amazing record of 184-42-8 for a fantastic .803 winning percentage; this trio directed TSU to four undefeated seasons and seven Black National Football Titles; and

WHEREAS, Coach Gilliam served TSU as Head Football Coach from 1989 to 1992, earning OVC Coach of the Year in 1990; throughout his career, Gilliam guided several players to the National Football League; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to accolades, Coach Gilliam earned honors from the Hall of Fame in West Virginia and Tennessee State University; he also received the National Football College Hall of Fame Contribution Award, the All-American Football Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Black Men of Middle Tennessee Foundation Award; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his work as a football trainer, Mr. Gilliam is an author and a much-sought-after national speaker; he continues to selflessly give back to the Nashville community; and

WHEREAS, Coach Gilliam exemplifies the unquestioned character and stalwart determination that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Coach Gilliam has carried out his duties with the utmost acumen, alacrity, diligence, and character, and he has earned the respect and admiration of his players, the administration, faculty, and student body of Tennessee State University, and the citizens of this State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Joe Gilliam, Sr., for his many accomplishments as football coach for Tennessee State University and for his honorable and astute service to this State, extending to him our best wishes for much continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.